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WELCOME TO THE SHOW!

I'm in terrible shape. While Christmas shopping last night I was passed in the parking lot by the guy returning 25 shopping carts.

PRESIDENTIAL WIT & WISDOM ([click here to buy the book](#))

(None on the weekends.)

"Happiness lies in the joy of achievement and the thrill of creative effort." – Thomas Jefferson

BIBLE VERSE OF THE DAY

1 Peter 2:17 = Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honor the emperor.

Romans 14:9 = For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.

HEARTLIGHT DAILY VERSE, PRAYER & THOUGHT

(From VerseOfTheDay.com)

While [Joseph and Mary] were [in Bethlehem], the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. — [Luke 2:6-7](#)

Thought: I've always been amazed at how God chose to place his Son into our world. He could have done it any way he wanted. But he chose this way — to enter the world in difficult times under difficult circumstances as a helpless infant who must be cared for by parents who were vulnerable to so many frailties. Yet in spite of the challenges that lay ahead and the bewildering mystery that confronted them, Joseph and Mary — along with everyone around them — were caught up in the great joy of this new child. Thank God for such new hope!

Prayer: Give me a heart of faith, O God, so that I might always see your sovereignty and grace being poured out on me in special ways. I am thrilled that you, the Creator and Sustainer of the entire universe, chose to enter my world as a child. Thank you for trusting your wonderful salvation to human flesh so we could know that you deemed us worthy of entering our world to make us right for yours. In the name of your Son, Jesus. Amen.

The Thoughts and Prayers for Today's Verse are written by [Phil Ware](#). You can email questions or comments to phil@heartlight.org.

"BIRTHDAY VERSE" OF THE DAY *(The chapter and verse correspond to the month and day!)*

1 Samuel 12:22 NIV = For the sake of his great name the LORD will not reject his people, because the LORD was pleased to make you his own.

TODAY IS FRIDAY – DECEMBER 22, 2017

(NOTE: Some holidays may be duplicated due to various calendars reporting conflicting dates)

WEIRD, WACKY, STRANGE, ZANY, ODD, BIZARRE, QUIRKY, UNUSUAL HOLIDAYS!

THERE ARE ONLY 02 SHOPPING DAYS UNTIL CHRISTMAS.

Today is **SANTA CLAUS CLEARANCE DAY**, the day the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration usually clears Santa Claus for his annual flight. The FAA says Santa's sleigh is equipped with an in-flight de-icing system for polar routes, a Terrain Avoidance Warning System required for low-altitude flights, and a special seat belt extension for a rotund pilot.

Today is **CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTS DAY**. ***Today?!? That's a little late to be stringing Christmas lights, isn't it?

Today is **NATIONAL DATE-NUT BREAD DAY**. ***As opposed to "Date a Nut Day" which is pretty much any day of the year.

FIRST FULL DAY OF WINTER (it began yesterday, but today is the first FULL day) -- The National Energy Commission says to winterize your home this winter make sure you check for air leaks, check your insulation & weather stripping and don't forget to check your heating system. ***That's great for most of the country, but what about those warmer climates like Southern California and Florida? Well, here are a few tips for those of you in the warmer climates...

- o Make sure you have enough SPF-30 handy for those "brrrr" 75 degree sunny days.
- o Make sure you have a supply of clean, long sleeve t-shirts for those chilly winter days.
- o Fuzzy head covers to keep your driver and 3-wood warm during those frigid 65-degree days on the golf course.
- o Be sure you have enough charcoal, cold drinks and blue & gold shorts to wear at those NFL tailgate parties.
- o Ladies, you may have to drop the hem an inch or so on your skirts to stay warmer at those outdoor happy hours.
- o Make sure your strappy sandals straps are at least 3/8" wide. You'll need the extra "warm" toe-coverage
- o And most importantly... try to locate the extra sheet for your bed to keep "toasty warm" at night.
- o Keep your lawnmower sharpened... that "dead, dormant" lawn will still need to be mowed twice a month.

And finally, today is **CHIPMUNKS DAY**, marking the day in 1958 when Alvin, Simon, and Theodore hit #1 with "The Chipmunk Song." ([audio clip](#))

TODAY IS ALSO...

Be A Lover of Silence Day

COMING UP NEXT (*Just a list, we are not endorsing the holidays posted below. Find more holidays and link to their websites at [BrownieLocks.com](#)*)

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 23

Festivus

Human Light Celebration

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24

Christmas Eve

Egg Nog Day

MONDAY, DECEMBER 25

A'Phabet Day or No "L" Day

Christmas

Christmas Pudding Day

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 26

Boxing Day (Canada)

National Candy Cane Day

National Thank-you Note Day

National Whiner's Day

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27

Free Balloon Day (SpongeBob Squarepants)

Howdy Dody Day

Visit The Zoo Day

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 28

Holy Innocents Day

Endangered Species Act Day

National Chocolate Day

Pledge of Allegiance Day

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 29

Tick Tock Day
YMCA Day

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30

Bacon Day
Falling Needles Family Fest Day
No Interruptions Day

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31

First Nights
Global Champagne Day
Look On The Bright Side Day
Make Up Your Mind Day
New Years Eve
New Year's Eve Banished Words List
New Year's Dishonor List
Universal Hour of Peace Day
World Healing Day
World Peace Meditation Day

MONDAY, JANUARY 01

Copyright Law Day
Commitment Day
Divorce Monday
Ellis Island Day
Euro Day
First Foot Day
Global Family Day
Mummer's Parade
New Years Day
New Year's Dishonor List Day
Polar Bear Plunge or Swim Day
Public Domain Day
Rose Bowl Game
Tournament of Roses Parade Day
World Day of Peace
Z Day

ON THIS DAY

1775: The colonists organized a Continental Navy fleet. ***It was a cool thing to do, as long as you didn't end up being one of the rowers.

1807: Congress passed the Embargo Act, which cut off all trade with Europe. ***Not to be confused with the Escargot Act, which resulted in a line of salt being drawn around the entire U.S.

1864: During the Civil War, Union General William T. Sherman sent a message to President Lincoln from Georgia, saying, "I beg to present you as a Christmas gift the city of Savannah." ***Of course, the toughest part was finding enough wrapping paper.

1882: The first Christmas tree with electric lights was turned on at the home of Ed Johnson in New York City. 1882: ***They actually invented them the year before but it took them a whole year to finish untangling them.

1937: The Lincoln Tunnel opened to traffic. ***And if I'm not mistaken, some of the first cars have finally made it through.

1945: Diane Sawyer was born in Glasgow, Kentucky. She was the national Junior Miss in 1962, worked as a press aide to President Richard Nixon, and was hired in 1981 to co-anchor the "CBS Morning News" with Charles Kuralt.

1948: Hank Williams recorded "Lovesick Blues."

1949: Rookie Tony Lavelli scored 26 points to lead the Boston Celtics to an 97-69 win over the defending NBA champion Minneapolis Lakers. Lavelli also entertained fans with a half-time accordion concert.

1955: The Walt Disney movie "The Littlest Outlaw" opened in movie theaters throughout the U.S.

1956: Billboard magazine reported Elvis Presley charted the most times during the year with 17 different records. Next was Pat Boone with five hit singles, and Fats Domino, Little Richard and the Platters had three each.

1963: An official 30-day mourning period following the assassination of President Kennedy came to an end.

1980: Stiff Records released an album entitled The Wit and Wisdom of Ronald Reagan. The entire LP contained no sound at all.

1984: Bernard Goetz shot and wounded four teenage boys on a New York subway after one of them approached him for money. ***Salvation Army bell-ringers beware!

1993: Singer Michael Jackson, fighting child molestation allegations, issued a video statement in which he said he was "totally innocent of any wrongdoing."

1999: Members of the 900-year-old thatched Norman Church of St. Peter and St. Paul in Mautby, England, announced the church would celebrate Christmas for the first time ever with electric lights. An anonymous benefactor has installed lights in the church that had always worshipped by candlelight because it could not afford electricity.

2002: Time magazine chose as its Persons of the Year three female whistleblowers: FBI agent Coleen Rowley; WorldCom auditor Cynthia Cooper; and former Enron vice president Sherron Watkins.

2006: A report from the Austin Energy power company in Texas has revealed approximately 20 percent of all its power outages are the result of squirrels. The squirrels had a habit of coming into contact with sensitive electrical equipment on utility poles and were likely responsible for nearly 700 area outages a year.

2007: A postcard was delivered in northwest Kansas featuring a color drawing of Santa Claus and a young girl – but it had been mailed in 1914, and was lost for over 90 years. The Christmas card was dated December 23, 1914, and mailed to Ethel Martin of Oberlin, apparently from her cousins in Alma, Nebraska. ***Well, at least it wasn't a card with MONEY in it.

TODAY IN CHRISTIAN HISTORY

1216: Pope Honorius III officially approves the Dominican Order, which is dedicated "to preaching and the good of souls." Founded earlier that year by Dominic, the order has since been associated with study and scholarship, and with such luminaries as Thomas Aquinas and Albertus Magnus.

1899: Evangelist Dwight L. Moody, the chief spokesman for the revivalist wing of American evangelicalism, dies.

1917: Francesca Xavier Cabrini, founder of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart, dies in Chicago's Columbus Hospital. In 1946 she was canonized by the Roman Catholic Church, becoming the first American citizen declared a saint.

HOLLYWOOD, SPORTS AND CELEBRITY FIGURE BIRTHDAYS

- Actress (*Blair Witch Project*) Heather Donahue, 43
- Actor (*The English Patient*, *Schindler's List*) Ralph Fiennes (rayf fines), 55
- Singer Robin Gibb 68
- TV journalist Diane Sawyer, 72
- Actor ("Chicago Hope") Hector Elizondo, 81

BEE-BOP BIRTHDAYS

(Music Artist Birthdays From SongFacts.com)

1937 : Red Steagall

1939 : James Gurley ([Big Brother & the Holding Company](#))
1944 : Barry Jenkins ([Nashville Teens](#), [The Animals](#))
1946 : Rick Nielsen ([Cheap Trick](#))
1949 : Robin Gibb [Bee Gees]
1949 : Maurice Gibb [Bee Gees]
1989 : [Jordin Sparks](#)

SECRETS OF THE UNIVERSE (*Answering questions that have plagued mankind for minutes!*)

What's with all the red and green during Christmas?

Red and Green - Possibly from the Holly, which was an early Christmas decoration. Or from the AD325 council of Nicaea, which laid down guidelines for symbolism in church art; Red - blood, sacrifice, divine love, courage, & martyrdom, Green - stood for hope, earth growth, spring, safety, rest youth, & victory, Blue - divine mystery, eternity, & heaven, Purple - royalty & riches, Violet - justice, penitence, pain, pity, & sadness, Gold - Spiritual riches, achievement, & good life, White - purity, faith, truth, peace, & eternity, Black - evil & unknown.

NEWS KICKERS

(None on weekends. Want a customizable version with your specific station tag, FREE? [Email me for more information!](#))

NEW NEWS KICKERS...

(Not posted on weekends and U.S. holidays.)

(This feature will be taking a break December 25th thru January 1st and will return Tuesday, January 2nd.)

The Dallas home of former NBA player Charlie Villanueva was recently burglarized. The thieves took a number of things — including his toilet. ***One thing they didn't take was embarrassment – he gets to keep that.

It's an especially joyful, or possibly annoying, time of year for a small group of women around the U.S. According to Census data, about 100 women happen to have the first name of Mary and the last name of Christmas. ***So if you're a parent thinking you are about to be clever in how you are naming your child... you're not. Please stop.

A BYU study says giving away free samples ensures more sales and loyalty in the long run. ***Now you know why drug dealers say "the first one is free". It's all about customer loyalty.

There is a woman in the UK who is planning to sprinkle her dead mother's ashes on her Christmas dinner. ***Someone has been smoking the mistletoe.

A Wisconsin man arrested for DUI was told by police (in Brown Deer) they must call someone responsible to pick them up. As it turned out, the man who showed up was also in no condition to be behind the wheel of a vehicle. ***So now they both need a driver... and bail money.

The biggest shopping day of the holiday season is approaching, with 66 percent of adult Americans — an estimated 155.7 million people – planning to or considering taking advantage of Super Saturday sales to complete their holiday gift list. Super Saturday is the last Saturday before Christmas. ***SUPER Saturday? I call it "Panic Because I Haven't Done Any Of My Christmas Shopping Yet And It's The Last Saturday I Can Go Shopping Saturday."

A Tennessee woman gave birth to a baby who was a frozen embryo for the past 24 years. ***Frozen that long, they should name her Elsa.

NEWS KICKER EVERGREENS...

(Not posted on weekends and U.S. holidays.)

(This feature will be taking a break December 25th thru January 1st and will return Tuesday, January 2nd.)

A study led by Dr. Chenchen Wang at Tufts University School of Medicine in Boston involved 66 fibromyalgia patients assigned to try either tai chi or wellness education and stretching exercises twice a week for 12 weeks. It turns out that tai chi eased painful joints and other symptoms of fibromyalgia in a small but well-done study of this ancient Chinese form of exercise. According to practitioners of tai chi (ty-CHEE'), it can improve muscle strength, balance, sleep, coordination and, some evidence suggests, fibromyalgia. ***Oh, wait... I'm sorry. This story is about tai chi. I'm sorry, I thought they were talking about chai tea... which I personally find very tasty.

According to a study by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, more than a third of US high school students think the First Amendment goes "too far" in granting free speech rights, and only half think newspapers should be allowed to publish stories without government approval. Only 83 percent think people should be allowed to express unpopular views. A Foundation spokesman called the trend disturbing and dangerous. ***Free speech goes too far? Fine – I guess we can tell these kids to shut up then, can't we?

Scientists at the University of Auckland have determined that mozzarella is the best kind of cheese used for making pizza. For their research, which was published in the Journal of Food Science, the food scientists watched as pizzas cooked with a variety of cheeses via "cameras and special software" to analyze and measure things like blistering, browning, elasticity and water density. ***This story brought to you by the Center for Stating The Obvious.

As states liberalize their marijuana laws, public officials and safety advocates worry that more drivers high on pot will lead to a big increase in traffic deaths. Researchers who have studied the issue, though, are divided on the question. Studies of marijuana's effects show that the drug can slow decision-making, decrease peripheral vision and impede multitasking, all of which are critical driving skills. But unlike with alcohol, drivers high on pot tend to be aware that they are impaired and they try to compensate by driving slowly, avoiding risky actions such as passing other cars, and allowing extra room between vehicles. ***In case you missed that, let me interpret it for you... yes, with marijuana being legalized, there will be more accidents – but they'll all be low impact, and everyone will be so mellow they won't care.

The British Council polled 7,000 English-learners in 46 countries to ask the most beautiful English word. 35,000 more people voted online to narrow it down to the top 70 most beautiful words. They include "peace, if, cute, lullaby, giggle, bliss, kangaroo, twinkle, bumblebee, grace, flabbergasted, tickle, sweetheart, blossom, liberty, destiny, freedom, tranquility and hippopotamus." Counting down the top five: "eternity, love, smile, passion," and at #1, "mother." ***So the most beautiful sentence ever constructed would be, "A flabbergasted bumblebee graced a mother hippopotamus, and it disturbed the kangaroo's passionate smile of tranquility."

AS THE JUNGLE TURNS

(Not updated on weekends and U.S. holidays.)

(This feature will be taking a break December 25th thru January 1st and will return Tuesday, January 2nd.)

[CLICK HERE](#) TO DOWNLOAD FRIDAY'S EPISODE

OPEN: And now, FancyMonkey.com, (Show Name), and (Station Call Letters) bring you As the Jungle Turns! When last we left the jungle, all of the animals had really busy schedules – so busy in fact that not only did they not have time to get everything done, but they didn't have time even to plan what they had to do! They didn't even have time for campfire meetings – and now, no time to even talk to each other!

CLOSE: It's no wonder they're so exhausted – they've been working so hard and so long without sleep! But now how will they get everything done on their schedules? Tune in again next time for another exciting episode of As the Jungle Turns!

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MOMENT OF DUH

Today's Moment of Duh is from the "It's Everyone's Fault But Mine" files...

40-year-old Antoinette Millard of Buffalo, New York, has filed a lawsuit against American Express saying it's their fault she went on a \$950,000 shopping spree and she wants them to cancel her bill! The shopping binge took place in New York City's priciest stores because after all, AmEx did imprudently issue her its prestigious Black Centurion Card. While buying all this expensive stuff Miss Millard pawned herself off as "Princess Antoinette" of a Saudi royal family and as a former Victoria's Secret model. She says she suffers from "anorexia, depression, panic attacks and head tumors," which made her such an impulsive, frenzied shopper that she just couldn't stop spending. Somehow this is all American Express' fault and she wants her outrageous debts taken off her card. ***MARLAR: Did you notice, as I did, that there was no mention of her RETURNING the stuff to the stores?

TOP TEN

TOP TEN MOST HATED CHRISTMAS GIFTS

Just in time for your last minute shopping trip, we've got some useful data. A new poll lists the world's top three most hated Christmas gifts. Are you ready? Number three -- socks! Number two -- handkerchiefs! And the number one most hated Christmas gift of all time... drum roll please... cheap perfume! Here's the top 10:

- Cheap perfume
- Handkerchiefs
- Socks
- Packaged toiletries
- Christmas sweaters
- Slippers
- Chocolates
- Power tools
- Executive stress toys
- Kitchen equipment

TOP TEN THINGS TO SAY IF YOU GOT ONE OF THE ABOVE GIFTS FOR CHRISTMAS

- "Hey! Now there's a gift!"
- "Well, well, well..."
- "Boy, if I had not recently shot up 4 sizes, that would've fit."
- "Perfect for wearing in the basement."
- "Gosh, I hope this never catches fire! It is fire season though. Lots of unexplained fires..."
- "If the dog buries it, I'll be furious!"
- "I love it but I fear the jealousy it will inspire."
- "Sadly, tomorrow I enter the Federal Witness Protection Program."
- "To think I got this the year I vowed to give all my gifts to charity."
- "I really don't deserve this."

THE FILES OF LAW & DISORDER

Police say they are too busy to arrest a wanted man... even though he turned himself in to the police station!

FILE #1: A *WANTED* man, trying to give himself up at the police station, was turned away by the police because, are you ready for this? They turned him away because they said they were too busy to arrest him and they asked him to return an hour later! Too busy to arrest a *WANTED* man? He even made it easy for them by walking into the police station and turning himself in and they were still too busy to arrest a *WANTED MAN*?!? What's even more odd, is that, exactly one hour later, the man did return and was arrested.

FILE #2: A shoplifter in Miami stole \$900 worth of clothing. While trying to escape, she jumped into the first car she saw with a door open. Unfortunately for her it happened to be a police car with two officers inside.

FILE #3: Fredericksburg, Virginia, police have charged a man with smashing into two other vehicles, a stoplight, and a florist shop's sign before ditching his car and jumping on a street sweeper in a vain attempt to escape from police.

STRANGE LAW: In Minnesota women may face up to 30 days in jail if they impersonate Santa Claus.

THIS IS YOUR BRAIN ON DRUGS

"This Is Your Brain On Drugs" is about people doing dumb things under the influence, but addiction is no laughing matter. If you or someone you know needs help, there's a toll free number you can call 1-800-438-0380. That's the Addiction Hope and Help Line at 1-800-438-0380.

63-year-old Joel Crytzer was charged with marijuana possession in Butler, Pennsylvania, after officers spotted some dope on the floor of his car. It looks as if Joel is a bit of a dope as well, because the cops initially stopped him because he had been cruising down the road, seemingly oblivious of the fact that his car had only three tires.

PHONER PHUN

According to a survey by Fandango.com, the Ten Worst Christmas Movies Ever Made are:

10. "Christmas with the Kranks"

9. "Surviving Christmas"
8. "Deck the Halls"
7. "Home Alone 3"
6. "Ernest Saves Christmas"
5. "Santa with Muscles"
4. "Jack Frost"
3. "Jingle All the Way"
2. "Silent Night, Deadly Night"
1. "Santa Claus Conquers the Martians"

PHONER: Have your listeners call in and add to the list!

BIBLE BRAIN BUSTER!

QUESTION: What evil priest had Jeremiah beaten and placed in chains?

ANSWER: Passhur (Jeremiah 20:1)

QUESTION IMPOSSIBLE

QUESTION: What department store launched the story of Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer? ([audio clip](#))

ANSWER: Montgomery Ward. Santa's Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer sprang from a commercial endeavor in 1939. A Montgomery Ward employee wrote the original story as part of a promotional "giveaway" program. The song gained prominence in the late 1940s.

TRUE OR FALSE

Pay attention! If our next player doesn't answer all ten T/F questions correctly we start all over from question #1! First person to answer question #10 correctly is our winner!

1. Frosty the Snowman had coals for eyes and a corn cob pipe for his nose. (False - his nose was a button.)
2. The original title of the poem, "'Twas The Night Before Christmas?" was actually, "A visit from Santa Claus." (False - but close. The original title was "A Visit With Saint Nickolas," written by Clement Clark Moore in 1822)
3. The tradition of whacking down fir trees, bringing them inside and decorating them comes from the Eastern United States. (False - it comes from medieval Germany)
4. The Mel Gibson film "Road Warrior" opened with the song "Jingle Bell Rock?" (False - that was "Lethal Weapon")
5. Myrrh is a form of cloth. (False - it's a perfume, made from gum resin of trees in Eastern Africa, India and Arabia. It was also used as a preservative.)
6. Frankincense is made from tree resin. (True)
7. Every snowflake has the same number of sides. (True - each snowflake has six sides.)
8. The name of the Grinch's dog from "The Grinch Who Stole Christmas" is Aarfie. (False - it's Max)
9. The average kid spends only 37 seconds in Santa's lap at the mall. (True - at least it's true for Macy's Department Store which decided to do the math on this.)
10. In the movie "Die Hard" the terrorists interrupt an office New Year's Eve party. (False - it's a Christmas party)

TABLOID MATCH GAME

You have to match the blank in the tabloid headline with the word or phrase that has been removed!

THE _____ FLU SPREADS (MAN)

PALO ALTO - Researches have confirmed the "Man Flu" is spreading like wildfire and may soon become an epidemic.

The Bird Flu is no longer a threat to humans, but the new strand of "Man Flu" is spreading across America. It can be deadly.

According to the study, this particular strand of "Man Flu" can be lethal – but only to other men!

Researches found that women should not be worried about getting the Man Flu from their partners because women are far better at resisting the bug.

"Women have an immune system that is well-adapted to fighting off The Man Flu," said Dr. John Blanton of the Stanford Medical Center.

Bottom line: men are weak and carry this dangerous flu bug; women are strong and can resist any "man flu" out there.

Australian researchers assisted the Stanford team in their research. The Australians found that female volunteers had a "much stronger immune response" to deadly virus than men.

BUT, the protection vanished after the menopause, suggesting it was regulated by female sex hormones. So, older women are susceptible to the Man Flu, but fewer older women encounter the deadly virus. Researchers are not sure why this is the case.

THE WAY TOO EARLY IN THE MORNING TO UNDERSTAND THE PUNCHLINE EVEN AFTER TWO CUPS OF COFFEE JOKE OF THE DAY

JOKE #1: ELF PICK-UP LINES

- "Just because I've got bells on my shoes, doesn't mean I'm a sissy."
- "I was once a lawn ornament for (ONE DIRECTION). Want to meet them?"
- "Hey, pretty lady, I can get you off the naughty list."
- "No, no. I don't bake cookies. You're thinking of those guys over at Keebler."
- "Hey... I'm down here!"

JOKE #2

A man, fond of practical jokes, decided late one night to send his friend a collect telegram which read: "I am perfectly well."

A week later, the joker received a heavy parcel...collect...on which he had to pay considerable charges. Upon opening it, he found a big block of concrete which had this message:

"This is the weight your telegram lifted from my mind."

JOKE #3

A boy, frustrated with all the rules he had to follow, asked his father, "Dad, how soon will I be old enough to do as I please?"

The father answered immediately, "I don't know. Nobody has lived that long yet."

USELESS FACTS

A Belgian prosecutor recommended that the Church of Scientology be charged with fraud and extortion for allegedly using illegal business contracts, violating privacy laws and conducting illegal medical practices. ***And worst of all, being responsible for the movie "Battlefield Earth."

A report links heavy TV watching as a child to later attention problems in teens. Results shows an increase in teens with ADD who watched a lot of television as children. ***Wait a minute . . . there are teens without A.D.D.?

FEATURED FUNNIES

SIGNS YOU'RE NOT GETTING A CHRISTMAS BONUS

- What *you* call "my new office," everybody else calls "the supply closet."
- When your boss came over for Thanksgiving, he was crushed under an avalanche of borrowed office supplies.
- In your most recent self-evaluation for your job, the boss returned it to you with red ink comments and a frowny face.
- On your door, you find a lovely wreath of pink slips.

IT MUST BE TRUE BECAUSE I HEARD IT ON THE RADIO!

RESTITUTION

Is it possible that a thief's conscience would eventually make him return something that he stole 2 years ago?

Two Christmas's ago, Lorraine Coughtry of Spencerville, Ontario had one of her favorite Christmas decorations - a wooden reindeer - stolen from her front porch. This week, it magically appeared in the very spot it sat when it was stolen. And, that's not all that was there! Along with it came a note of apology from the thief. Ah, the Christmas spirit gets to everyone!

INSPIRATIONAL INSPIRATION

WINTER POEM

by Laurie Lee

*Tonight the wind gnaws with teeth of glass
The jackdaw shivers in caged branches of iron
The stars have talons
There is hunger in the mouth of vole and badger
Silver agonies of breath in the nostril of the fox
Ice on the rabbit's paw
Tonight has no moon, no food for the pilgrim
The fruit tree is bare, the rose bush a thorn
And the ground is bitter with stones
But the mole sleeps and the hedgehog lies curled in a womb of leaves
And the bean and the wheat seed hug their germs in the earth
And a stream moves under the ice
Tonight there is no moon
But a star opens like a trumpet over the dead
And tonight in a nest of ruins the blessed babe is laid
And the fir tree warms to a bloom of candles
And the child lights his lantern and stares at his tinsel toy
And our hearts and hearths smoulder with live ashes
In the blood of our grief the cold earth is suckled
In our agony the womb convulses its seed
And in the last cry of anguish
The child's first breath is born*

DRIVE TIME DEVOTIONAL

ASK GOD

Nicolette was confused. Her only knowledge of Jesus Christ had come from Christmas carols she had heard. Now, the One she understood from lyrics only was being presented to her as the Messiah—the Prince of Peace. The young Jewish woman was hearing this information from a believer in Christ who attended her school—the University of Toronto. The guy exuded a true understanding of God. Nicolette wanted to know God the way he seemed to know Him.

Looking back on her years prior to this pivotal conversation, Nicolette says, “I talked to God and prayed to Him, but I didn't really know Him. I had invented my own version of God by picking and choosing characteristics I liked. I believed everyone was equally entitled to his or her own view. But I never asked God.”

Nicolette had been brought up to believe that one day Messiah would come to bring peace to her people, the Jews. The possibility of Jesus being the Savior of the world intrigued her.

After the discussion with her college friend, Nicolette searched the Bible for more information about Jesus. She also prayed and asked God for insight.

Verses like Isaiah 59:2 (which states that sin keeps people separated from God) and Isaiah 53:10 (which details Messiah being sacrificed for those sins) opened Nicolette's heart to receive Christ as her Savior. She recognized that Jesus was the perfect fulfillment of the messianic prophecies. Through Jesus, her Savior, she finally knew God.

“Jesus has given me real life,” she says, “not just time on earth—but an eternal, living relationship with the living God of Israel. God is my strength and my love and my life, and I owe Him everything.”

Nicolette came to know God after asking Him to reveal Himself. By searching His Word and through the work of the Holy Spirit, she received Christ and came to know God in a personal way.

Do you know God? Do you want to know Him better? Ask Him to reveal Himself as you study the Bible. Pray for specific knowledge and understanding of who He is. He will take your confusion and make things clearer in time.

Just ask Him.

—Tom Felten

LEFTOVERS

REINDEER GAMES

Santa's eight reindeer might want to go on strike - they're doing the work of more than 300,000 reindeer!

According to a study by American Greetings, if the average child gets two pounds of gifts this year, Santa's sleigh will leave the North Pole carrying 51,000 tons of toys. And since the average reindeer can pull just 300 pounds, the number of deer necessary to operate the sleigh would be 339,333. Plus, since the typical reindeer is 5 feet long, that means Santa's flight crew now stretches 848,332 feet in length (160 miles), if the deer fly two-by-two. ***MARLAR: Yeah, right... whatever. Next thing they'll say is that the whole "Santa-thing" is just a big charade! What do mathematicians know?

LIFE... LIVE IT

ONE DAY CHRISTMAS SHOPPING

Here's how to do all your Christmas shopping in one day.

- **Make a list** -- Make a list of the gifts you need to buy and include a backup gift in case you can't find what you're looking for. There's no law that says you have to give everyone a different gift.
- **Shop online** -- Online merchants allow you to purchase a variety of products from the comfort of your home.
- **Establish a budget** -- Assign a dollar amount to each gift and you might avoid overspending.
- **Prepare an itinerary** -- Get organized and map out your targets. Also, call stores beforehand to confirm they have what you're looking for.
- **Select a day** -- The trick to getting all your shopping done in one day is picking the right day. Avoid shopping on the weekend -- that's when everybody goes. Shop on a weekday, as early in the week as possible to avoid traffic, lineups and parking fiascos.
- **Don't spend more time than necessary in one store** -- If, after a brief survey of the premises, you can't locate the coveted item, wave a salesperson over and ask them to get it for you.
- **Read the fine print** -- To avoid nasty surprises upon gift giving, keep every receipt and ask each store about its return policy.

JUST FOR FUN

MALL PARKING: WHERE DO YOU RANK?

This is probably one of the worst weeks of the year for finding a parking space at the mall. The folks at Response Insurance say there are basically four types of drivers in the parking lot:

- **The Search & Destroy** type roams the aisles cruising endlessly for the perfect spot to open up. This stress-provoking method can also lead to conflict with fellow Search & Destroyers.
- **Those who Lay & Wait** position themselves at the end of an aisle waiting for a space to open up in what they start to see as their territory. This type runs the risk of turf battles with Search & Destroyers.
- **Drivers who simply See It & Take It** are often the most successful and least stressed out. They take the first spot they see in the lot, almost regardless of the distance to the store entrance. They will likely walk farther (and work off some of those holiday-pounds) and will often save time as well.
- But perhaps the most predatory are the **Stalkers**, who watch for shoppers leaving the store and slowly follow them back to their parking spot, like the shark in Jaws. This method is fraught with pitfalls since either a Search & Destroy or a Lay & Wait might be closer to the space when they get there. In addition, the shopper could either intentionally or not, walk down the wrong aisle looking for their car, leaving the Stalker out in the cold.

... When it comes to driver habits, interestingly enough they found that Stalkers are more likely to be women. On average, 12% of female drivers admit to trailing people in their cars, but just 5% of men do so.

[More notes about stalkers: Regionally, drivers in the south are most likely to stalk for parking (12%) vs. the mid-west, which nationally ranked lowest (6%). In addition, drivers in metropolitan areas are more prone to stalk (10%) vs. those in non-metro areas (7%), and the survey also indicated that single people were somewhat more likely to stalk for parking than those with children (12% vs. 9%).]

FUN LIST

WORST CHRISTMAS MOVIES EVER MADE (REAL VERSION)

(According to a survey by Fandango.com)

10. "Christmas with the Kranks"
9. "Surviving Christmas"

8. "Deck the Halls"
7. "Home Alone 3"
6. "Ernest Saves Christmas"
5. "Santa with Muscles"
4. "Jack Frost"
3. "Jingle All the Way"
2. "Silent Night, Deadly Night"
1. "Santa Claus Conquers the Martians."

TOP FIVE WORST CHRISTMAS MOVIES NEVER MADE

- o "Snakes on a Sleigh"
- o "Superman Returns Christmas Presents"
- o "Silent Talladega Night"
- o "Freddy Kruger's Miracle on Elm Street"
- o "It's a Wonderful Life Insurance and Why You Need It"

MORE SHOW PREP STUFF...

WRAPPING UP THE HOLIDAYS

It's that time of year again, where we go through rolls and rolls of wrapping paper! How can you make nice presents without spending a fortune? Here are some ideas:

- **Sunday Funnies:** Use the Sunday funnies. Especially for kids, this is a great way to wrap presents. Take the Sunday funnies (because they're color and more interesting) and use them to carefully wrap your gifts (so the receiver can read them again when the gift is unwrapped). If you know the receiver has a specific cartoon or cartoons that he/she really loves, be sure to put that one on the outside so he/she can see it.
- **Old Greeting Cards:** Cut out old greeting cards. Grab brown paper bags, butcher paper or plain brown wrapping paper. Wrap the gift first, and then, using glue and glitter, paste the pictures from the greeting cards all around the gift for a special personalized touch. This also works with pretty stickers.
- **Rubber Stamps:** Stamp it! You can get rolling stamps, which give you a full line of repeated characters or just single stamps. Again, start with brown paper bags, butcher paper, plain brown wrap or tissue paper. Stamp to your heart's content and then wrap the gift.
- **Draw It:** This is a great activity for young children and makes a special "additional gift" for grandparents, godparents, close friends and more. Take plain white paper and let your little one draw or paint a picture on it.

OTHER STUFF I WANT TO CRAM INTO TODAY'S PREP

(Not posted on weekends and U.S. holidays.)

It's puppy love all over again — 70 years later. Lauris Hiner, 89, was still a teenager when Paul, her high school sweetheart, left to fight in World War II. The two lost touch after that, marrying other loves and starting families. But three years ago, Paul, 90, began sending his long lost love sweet messages and rose bouquets once he learned that Lauris lost her spouse, as he also did. After years of sweet phone calls and dozens of roses, Paul finally got his date. Lauris' daughter recently took her mother to Seattle, Washington, for a date with Paul...a date 7 decades in the making.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/tv/celebrity/90-year-old-wwii-vet-spends-years-wooing-high-school-sweetheart-and-finally-gets-a-date/ar-BBGYOA3>

What's the most annoying word in the English language? For the ninth consecutive year, Americans say "whatever" is the most annoying word or phrase used in casual conversation. 33% of Americans consider "whatever" to be the most annoying word or phrase. The recent addition of "fake news" takes second place with 23% followed closely by "no offense, but" with 20%. 11% think "literally" is the most grating word used in conversation while 10% assert "you know what I mean" is the most agitating.

<http://maristpoll.marist.edu/1218-whatever-loses-ground-but-retains-annoying-word-title/>

Jimmy Dean has concocted your perfect holiday-inspired cookie. Yes, you read that right — sausage cookies. Everyone can grab a cookie cutter and make his or her favorite holiday shape: snowmen, reindeer, even a Welsh corgi-shaped sausage patty is possible! Check out the complete instructions in Women's World Magazine

<http://www.womansworld.com/posts/jimmy-dean-sausage-recipes-christmas-cookie-149319>

Walmart is trying to ease some of its workers' financial strain by allowing them to receive wages before their next payday. Instead of waiting two weeks between paychecks, Walmart workers can now use an app to access a portion of wages for hours they have already worked. Walmart said the new initiative is intended to help workers avoid costly payday loans and other debt traps, and reduce the stress that comes with financial hardship.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/13/business/walmart-workers-pay-advances.html>

They may have been born almost four decades apart, but this grandmother and granddaughter are now part of the same graduating class at Chicago State University. Belinda Berry, 62, and Karea Berry, 25, both walked across the stage on Thursday to accept their diplomas. And they're not done with their education either -- both plan to attend graduate school. Both graduated with bachelor's degrees, but Belinda managed to do so at the top of her class in business. Karea didn't do so bad for herself either, though. She earned a degree in criminal justice and will start working toward her master's in mental health counseling at CSU next year.

<http://abcn.ws/2BbkcdF>

(PERENNIAL) 7 THINGS YOU PROBABLY DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT CHRISTMAS

1. The first recorded Christmas celebration wasn't until 336 A.D.
2. It's unclear why we celebrate Christmas on December 25.
3. Some Orthodox churches celebrate Christmas in January.
4. The Puritans despised Christmas.
5. The Christmas tree tradition emerged in the 16th century.
6. St. Francis invented the nativity scene centuries after Jesus's birth.
7. Writing "Xmas" is actually theologically sound. The Greek letter X is the first letter of "Christ"

<http://huff.to/2hNVZ2O>

SOUL-GLO

(Feel-good stories! Only posted as new stories come available. Not posted on weekends and U.S. holidays.)

This season of giving is bittersweet for Daniel Alvarado after losing his brother Diego last year. Eight years ago Diego was diagnosed with Leukemia, and despite his pain he and his brother began collecting toys for the Children's Hospital Colorado. Diego may be gone, but in an act of brotherly love Daniel is continuing to collect toys for their nonprofit group Cancer Fighters to the Rescue. This year more than 3,000 toys were donated in Diego's honor. In the past eight years, they've collected more than 10,000 toys. <http://abcn.ws/2oELmUm>

TOTALLY OUTRAGEOUS!

(Only posted as stories come available. Not posted on weekends and U.S. holidays.)

In Tacoma, Washington, Jaireme Barrow was sick and tired of having his Amazon packages stolen from his front porch. Crystal-clear surveillance video of porch pirates strolling onto his front yard and then making off with what he could only assume were the Jeep parts and electronics he'd paid for. But there were never any arrests which infuriated Barrow even more. So that's when he came up with the idea for TheBlankBox. The nondescript dummy box is placed in plain sight. When an unsuspecting thief lifts it, a 12-gauge shotgun blank goes off. Barrow says it's very loud but technically harmless. Too bad the police say it's illegal. There are, however, no open cases against Barrow. Barrow says, "The very first guy I did it to, he was so scared he dropped his cellphone in my front yard and I gave it to the cops. Turns out, he lived, like, three blocks away from me." The man wasn't charged, Barrow said. But before you go try something like this, police spokesperson Loretta Cool said Barrow could also be held liable if someone gets hurt on his property during or after an explosion." She added, "I'm not sure if people realize that, even though this person is stealing something, he can't intentionally set them up to be hurt." But she also said police are not currently investigating Barrow because "nobody has reported this. We have to have a victim." Barrow, who says he has caught 20 would-be thieves in the act at his home, concedes that his not-quite-exploding box is an imperfect solution on a crowded porch of imperfect solutions. (The Star)

AND I LEAVE YOU WITH THIS THOUGHT

If you think doing a show like this is easy, you're mistaken. It takes a lot of creativity and energy to come up with all the necessary excuses after a show like this is over.

THE TICKET Movie Reviews with MARIE ASNER

Marie Asner has been reviewing films for over 35 years. Her outlets include radio, print and Internet. For more in-depth movie reviews of the following films, visit www.Tollbooth.org. Ratings from 1 (Low) to 5 (High).

DECEMBER 15, 2017...

Star Wars: The Last Jedi--- This holiday season at the movie box-office has special treats for fans, from “The Shape Of Water” to the animated “Ferdinand” to the new version of “Jumanji.” The biggest treat may be the new “Star Wars” film about The Last Jedi. It begins right at the end of the first “Star Wars” (2015) where Rey (Daisy Ridley) finds Luke Skywalker (Mark Hamill) and that was that. Now, we see what will happen, and the familiar characters are there from R2D2 to C P30 to Princess Leia (the late Carrie Fisher) and how that is handled. Also, Chewbacca has a new actor, Joonas Suotamo has replaced Peter Mayhew. Onboard is also John Boyega as Finn and Adam Driver, all dressed in black. Planning ahead to the holiday season of 2019, will come Episode 9. “Star Wars: The Last Jedi” is rated PG 13 and a rating of 4 and the fans know who they are. May the Force be with them all.

I, Tonya---The world of sports can be knife sharp in competition, down to .001 at times, and one of the most competitive is figure skating. This wasn't always the case, but with years of media coverage, the sport has taken on almost a fashion look as well as an athletic one. Rivalry is intense and none more so than in women's figure skating. “I, Tonya” (played by Margot Robbie) presents Tonya Harding's side of the story in which she allegedly hired someone to injure her rival, Nancy Kerrigan. Talk about front page news. Harding's ex-husband, Jeff Gillooly (played by Sebastian Stan) was the villain, with Harding's mother, LaVona (played by Allison Janney) as a hard-hearted stage mother. Several aspects of that particular situation are presented by director Craig Gillespie. The idea of trying to harm/maim your rival is a harsh one and the press had a field day. “Tonya” is rated R. Rating of 2 for fans.

Ferdinand---This charming animated film is about a Spanish fighting bull, but he doesn't have fight in him. Instead, he likes flowers. Adapted from the story of “Ferdinand,” by Munro Leaf and Robert Lawson, we see what happens when Ferdinand is accidentally taken into a bull ring. What to do? He has friends, though, a horse, dog and hedgehog. Voices are of John Cena as Ferdinand, and Kate McKinnon and Anthony Anderson. “Ferdinand” is rated PG. Rating of 3 for fans.

Gotti---John Gotti was a famous mobster in New York City. He ruled the town and in this film, John Travolta takes on the role of Gotti, with Kelly Preston as his wife and Spencer Lofranco as his son, John Gotti, Jr. Violence follows the life of someone in crime. Also in the cast are Stacy Keach and Leo Rossi. “Gotti” is rated R. No rating.

The Shape Of Water---Sally Hawkins is making a name for herself as an actress this year. Not only did she do a splendid job as Maud Davis in “Maudie,” playing a woman with disabilities who overcomes great difficulty to become an artist, but now in “The Shape Of Water,” she does it again. A mute. This film is a science fiction/fantasy film of wanting to communicate and not being able to do so. Facial expression and body language do the acting instead of vocal expression. This is a Guillermo del Toro film, so expect the unexpected. The storyline is in the mid 1960's, the Cold War, and an experiment that is Top Secret. Hawkins and her friend, Octavia Spencer, are janitors in this special lab, but they do a bit of investigating and find something quite, quite unexpected and what an experiment, it is. Human? “The Shape Of Water” mixes science with compassion and, of course, the government that is just a step behind everyone who is curious. Also in the film are Doug Jones, Michael Shannon as the villain, and Richard Jenkins. Terrific soundtrack. “The Shape Of Water” is rated PG 13. Rating of 3 for science fiction fans.

DECEMBER 20, 2017...

Jumanji: Welcome To The Jungle---The first “Jumanji” came out in 1995, starring Robin Williams, and was a hit with its special effects. This update version of a game board that doesn't want to give up, The updated version has four people who get caught up in a video game and find themselves in another world and in other bodies. The stars are Dwayne Johnson, Kevin Hart, Karen Gillan and Jack Black. The names of some of the characters they portray are colorful including Dr. Smolder Bravestone and Ruby Roundhouse. Set in Hawaii, there are jungle animals. Slapstick humor, too, whereas the first film, was kid-minded, this one is gadget minded. That all said, “The Rock” has gone from one action movie to another and more planned for the future. Kevin Hart is a comic who blends in with any actor. Beware, jungle. As far as “The Rock,” what a career for a man who began as a professional wrestler. We will see how this new version of the board game works. “Jumanji: Welcome To The Jungle” is rated PG 13. Rating of 2 for fans.

DECEMBER 22-25, 2017...

Bright---How about living in a fantasy world where humans and fantasy creatures have co-existed for eons. This is an alternate Earth, and policeman Will Smith and his Orc partner, Joel Edgerton, are on duty. However, there is evil afoot and they have to find a magic wand before anyone else. Also in the cast are Noomi Rapace and Lucy Fry. “Bright” is rated PG 13. No rating.

Downsizing---Bet you thought this term mean problems in the work force. Think again. In this film, it concerns shrinking people (shades of “The Incredible Shrinking Man.”) There is a purpose in this movie, though, and that is if you want to control populations and have the environment last, make the people smaller. Hmm, does that mean family

pets, too? One swipe of that paw and....! To begin the experiment, a group of people are purposely shrunk to four inches and live together, but then problems come forth. Stars are Matt Damon, Christoph Waltz, Udo Kier and Kristen Wiig. "Downsizing" is rated PG 13. Rating of 2 for fans.

Happy End---This is a depressing film about a family with poisoning and suicides in their past. The story centers on a teenage girl named Eve (Fantine Hardoin) with a troubled past and uncertain future. She eventually lives with her aunt (Isabelle Huppert) and still has problems. Others in the cast are Toby Jones and Jean-Louis Trintignant. French language film. "Happy End" is rated R. No rating.

Father Figures (also called "Bastards")---This film stars Owen Wilson and Ed Helms as fraternal twins. Their Mom is Glenn Close and they, as adult, find she doesn't know who their biological father(s) are. What to do? The search is on. Also in the cast are Christopher Walken and J. K. Simmons. "Father Figures" is rated PG 13. No rating.

Hostiles---Christian Bale stars in this western as an army officer in 1892, who agrees to escort a Native American tribal chief and his family back to their family ground. Of course, there are problems along the way with outsiders and weather. The cast includes Wes Studi, Adam Beach and Rosamund Pike. "Hostiles" is rated R. No rating.

Pitch Perfect 3---This is supposed to be the last film in the series, but then everyone says that. The group goes separate ways after winning their championship. Trouble is, they are bored, so along comes a chance to join the USO and entertain troops abroad. But, of course, they get into trouble. The stars include Hailee Steinfeld, Anna Kendrick, Rebel Wilson, Ruby Rose and Elizabeth Banks. "Pitch Perfect 3" is rated PG 13. No rating.

The Greatest Showman---Hugh Jackman is quite the performer, from "Wolverine" to Broadway. Here he takes on the role of P. T. Barnum and how he put together his wonderful circus. There are animals, clowns and trapeze artists, which brings us to singer, Zendaya, who plays Anne Wheeler. She is a trapeze artist who falls for P. T. Barnum's partner, played by Zac Efron. Zandaya did most of her own stunts in this film. Also in the cast are Rebecca Ferguson and Michelle Williams. Music by John Debney and Justin Paul. How to put a show together? The Big Top has it all. "The Greatest Showman" is rated PG. Rating of 2 for fans. For children over age ten.

The Phantom Thread---Daniel Day Lewis submerses himself in his acting roles. From "My Right Foot" to "The Last of the Mohicans" and now a fashion designer in "The Phantom Thread." Lewis has said that this is his final film and then he will retire from acting. However, sometimes a tempting role does come along... A phantom thread is a part of fabric/design in which, if you have the right thread, can unravel the garment. Much like a government, in which one small detail can bring the house down. In this film, set in the 1950's in London, Daniel Day-Lewis is a couture fashion designer to nobility, along with his sister (Lesley Manville) and they have a structured life. Enter the outspoken, Alma (Vicky Krieps) who gives new fashion inspiration to Daniel, but his sister begins to see the facade crack and doesn't know how her brother will handle, perhaps, love? Jonny Greenwood composed the score and the film was written and directed by Paul Thomas Anderson. "The Phantom Thread" is rated PG-13. Rating of 3 for fans of fashion and the stars.

DECEMBER 29, 2017...

Film Stars Don't Die In Liverpool---An odd title for a movie, but then this film isn't about your usual actress. It is about Gloria Grahame, an actress in the 1950's who won a Best Supporting Actress Award for "The Bad and the Beautiful." Other memorable roles were in "Oklahoma," "Sudden Fear" and "It's A Wonderful Life." Annette Bening takes on the role of Gloria Grahame, whose regular life was more colorful than her screen life. She had several husbands and married her step-son, here played by Jamie Bell. Also in the cast are Vanessa Redgrave and Julie Waters. "Film Stars Don't Die In Liverpool" is rated R. Rating of 2 for fans.

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